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'Konza' aromatic sumac

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'Konza' aromatic sumac

'Konza' aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatica* var. *serotina* (Green) Rehd.) is a deciduous, native, perennial shrub that can be used in many types of conservation plantings. Because it is a native species it requires little maintenance and tolerates drought. It is useful for windbreaks, cover on areas subject to critical erosion, screening unsightly areas, and noise control. Konza provides good cover and limited food for a variety of birds and mammals. Although not selected for landscaping, Konza does have potential for use in highway rest areas and recreation areas and for trapping snow.

Description

Konza is a somewhat rounded and densely branched shrub. It reaches a height of 10 feet on favorable sites and general-

ly grows wider than its height. Flowers appear from March to April, and clusters of fruit 1.5 inches in diameter develop in July. The fruit is red, densely haired, and about one-fourth inch in diameter and covers a smooth, reddish-brown, oval seed.

Establishment

For Konza you can follow standard planting dates and spacing recommended for shrubs in your area. You should plant early in spring, as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The optimum spacing between plants is approximately 4 feet, but can vary depending upon site conditions and the objective of the planting. One-year-old seedlings are suitable for planting.



A row of Konza aromatic sumac 5 years after seedlings were planted. The shrubs are about 9 feet tall and 11 feet wide.

Control weeds, and provide supplemental irrigation during the first growing season if excessively dry conditions exist. Konza should not require any supplemental irrigation after it is established.

Seed Propagation

Konza seed may be planted in the fall and allowed to undergo a temperature-moisture process to break seed dormancy. It may also be planted in mid-May according to standard nursery production practice after it is cleaned and soaked 40 minutes in concentrated sulfuric acid and then washed thoroughly. *Warning:* Sulfuric acid should only be used by experienced seedsmen or by others only after carefully following label cautions for its use.



Fruit is harvested in July after ripening. It is cleaned by macerating and then drying or by hammermilling and then running the milled material through an air-screen cleaner.

There are approximately 20,000 seeds per pound. Plants generally do not start to produce seed before they are 3 or 4 years old. Commonly, individual plants or certain branches of individual plants bear large quantities of fruit while neighboring plants remain barren.

Adaptation

Konza is well adapted in Kansas, Nebraska, western Iowa, and northwestern Missouri (see adaptation map). It grows well on a wide range of soil types.

Availability

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) maintains breeder seed for Konza at the Plant Materials Center near Manhattan, Kansas. Foundation seed is available from both the Kansas and Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Stations.

For more information on where to buy Konza aromatic sumac and how to use and plant it, contact your local SCS office. It is listed in your telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Assistance is available without regard to national origin, race, creed, color, sex, age, or handicap.

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